

## Positive Engagement Saves Lives

The Combat Readiness Center is often remiss in passing along the great work our Army is doing and sharing with our teammates our collective “good news stories.” It’s well worth mentioning and remembering the multitude of successes of our Army and, just as important, looking at acquired lessons learned to ensure we incorporate them in our next event. While the USACRC can tell you exactly how many Soldiers are lost in accidental fatalities, what’s impossible to pass along are the many, many Soldiers your direct leadership has “saved.” As an “Army Strong” formation, we do many things well. Please allow me to discuss some of these great things our Army is executing.

The attention and awareness level focused on identifying and mitigating risk in all we do is as high as anytime in my years of service. This energy and willingness to “engage” is evident from our most senior-level leaders down to and including the youngest Soldiers in our basic and advanced individual training. I personally spoke with and observed young Soldiers, cadets and our civilian teammates that are proactive and adamant in their roles, missions and contributions as “part of the solution set versus part of the problem.” While we expect the involvement of leaders in day-to-day risk mitigation, the good news is most of our younger Soldiers are absolutely involved and understand that complacency and overconfidence are dangerous.

Engaged leaders promoting and executing the Motorcycle Mentorship Program dropped our Army’s motorcycle losses by some 50 percent. Weekly, the USACRC receives personal accounts from Soldiers that attribute training, adherence to standards, and our Army’s active engagement in this most “worthwhile program” to saving lives. Included in this issue of Knowledge is an article about a crew whose Bradley Fighting Vehicle rolled into a rain-swollen canal in Iraq. While the BFV was crossing a bridge, the road beneath collapsed. This and and like scenarios, are played time and again with BFVs, HMMWVs and M1s and, more often than not, with disastrous consequences for the lives of our Soldiers. This time, however, the outcome was different. All three Soldiers survived and escaped without serious injury.

Why did this crew make it when many before did not? We attribute their success to a combination of things: training, survival equipment and pre-combat checks and procedures. But when it comes down to it, the individual Soldiers themselves made the difference by correctly applying their training and experience gained under the watchful eye of an “engaged leader”.

Training and experience also were evident in our last two catastrophic Class A aviation accidents, where numerous personnel successfully egressed from an otherwise totally destroyed aircraft. In another event, when an AH-64D in Iraq was hit by enemy fire and rendered unflyable, the crew was able to quickly diagnose the damage and remarkably land the nearly-destroyed aircraft. They were quickly recovered by a sister aircraft operating in the immediate area.




These two examples demonstrate how aviators used their training to great effects. These successes by our aviators contribute to an overall decrease in accident rates and aircraft losses the Army is experiencing in fiscal 2007.

Leadership is evident in every aspect of what our Soldiers execute throughout the world. It's evident our Army clearly understands the "No. 1 Most Effective Tool" in our vast array of "things we use" to mitigate losses and make a difference in saving lives is ENGAGED LEADERS AT ALL ECHELONS. All that said, we can do better.

These accidents and the actions of our crews reinforce the importance of direct leadership engagement, training and executing to standard. Doing the correct thing when no one is watching will save lives. While you can't dictate outside forces such as the weather or the enemy, you can control your actions inside your vehicle, cockpit or living area and turn a bad situation into a survivable one.

Be a leader, act as a team and stay engaged to stay alive! ARMY STRONG!!!!



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